

TERN VIEWS



*A photographic journey
along the river Tern*

ANDREW D. BODEN

Tern Views

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along the river Tern

by Andrew D. Boden

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1998

Introduction

This short book began as a few photographs for my wife's class of Market Drayton schoolchildren, but as I began to follow the Tern from its source to its eventual meeting with the Severn I found out many interesting facts and talked to numerous pleasant and helpful people, all of whom were enthusiastic about their particular stretch of the river and most willing to assist me with facts, stories and reminiscences. The abundance and variety of flora and fauna was also an interesting aspect of the changing environment along the river; indeed it became difficult to decide what to include and what to omit. I therefore decided that the place of this book was to provide an introduction to the river as it is at present, with references to its past life and work, leaving any deeper research into particular features to those with more particular or specialist interest in specific areas and buildings. In some cases, for instance Wollerton and Allscott mills, detailed study of privately owned buildings is more appropriately left for the owners themselves to carry out, and in others such as Attingham Park and estate, detailed study has already been undertaken by skilled professionals and a wealth of information is available. Also I decided to keep close to the track of the river itself, only including items directly associated with it, or at least within sight of it, and so more distant items of interest, such as Hodnet Hall and Gardens, though within the boundaries of the Tern Valley, have been omitted or only briefly alluded to. Nevertheless I hope that these self-imposed restrictions do not detract from the story, but rather help to keep focussed on the Tern and the variety and abundance of uses to which this short, simple stream has been subjected.

Each picture has been annotated with the National Grid reference and it may be useful for the reader to follow the course of the Tern using a suitable scale map. In this way other features which have not been mentioned in the text can be spotted and explored at the reader's leisure.

I make no claims to be a skilled historian, geographer or archaeologist, simply an interested amateur, and though I have attempted some book and document-based research, much of the text is derived from first-hand observation and the words of people I have spoken to along the way. If, therefore, I have omitted something important about **your** particular stretch of the Tern, or if I have made a glaring error, please accept my apology. However, from some of the research I have undertaken it is noticeable that the 'experts' do not necessarily agree and I hope that my text, if not always detailed or derived from other documentation, gives a good overall impression of the area.

In his book 'A History of Market Drayton', published in 1861, the Rev. J.R. Lee devotes a short chapter to the river Tern. He discusses the origin of the river's name and concludes that it is derived from an old word 'tern' meaning *vehement* or *impetuous*, though the river must have been larger and faster flowing than is obvious today if it were to be described in these terms. He also notes several references to the river in poetry and prose; firstly Llynwarc Hen, a 6th century Welsh warrior and bard refers to it a number of times in his 'Heroic Elegies' translated and published by Owen Pughe in 1792. The 16th century historian, Hollinshed, relates,

The Terne, a faire streame and worthie to be well handled, if it laie in me to perform it. This river riseth in a mere beside Well-bridge Park, neere unto Terne Mere village in Staffordshire, from whence it runneth by the parkes side to Knighton, Norton and Betton; and at Draiton Hales crosseth with a water coming from about Adbaston. After this confluence it runneth to Draiton Hales, Ternhill Bridge

In his book, published about 1538, the antiquary, Leland, writes,

Terne riseth neere Mere village in Staffordshire.....The river of Terne cometh into the Severne, almost in the midde way betwixt Acham and Rochester. At Drayton, a market towne, is a small bridge. Drayton castle upon Terne river, about 12 miles from Shrewisbyri.

References to the river are also made in agreements regarding fishing rights which anciently belonged to the abbot of Shrewsbury and it seems that at one time the Tern was well regarded concerning the 'size, excellence and abundance of its trout'.

Charles Darwin, the noted 19th century naturalist, has a tenuous link with the river in that he often visited his 'Uncle Jos' (Josiah Wedgwood II) at Maer Hall where the Tern rises and eventually married his cousin Emma. Also he was born in Shrewsbury, attended the grammar school there and was at least a friendly hunting acquaintance of Major Hill, later to become Lord Berwick of Attingham. Therefore he has a connection with the river from start to finish.

Nevertheless, references to the Tern are few and real description even rarer, most writers seeming content to sum up the river in similar fashion to Walter White in his book 'All around the Wrekin' -

The Tern, a little river, that flows from Aqualate Mere to the Severn, enlivening a pastoral valley on its way.

Apart from the inaccuracy of this description (Aqualate Mere is the starting-point for the river Meese, not the Tern) it is typically brief - almost dismissive. I hope that this short book will help to put a little flesh on these extremely bare bones.

Thanks must go to all those interesting, pleasant and helpful people along the Tern who were always co-operative in allowing me to invade their privacy, wander over their land and who were either informative themselves or pointed me towards other useful sources of information. With respect to the privacy of many people who I spoke to, please note that there are several views in this book which cannot be seen from the road or public footpaths and so any attempt to visit them should be preceded by an approach to the landowners for permission.

Special thanks to Francesca Upton for her script reading, helpful criticism and advice.

Mike Smith for original production and printing.

My wife, June, whose fault it was that I started this venture, and for still showing interest while I was being boringly enthusiastic and talkative about it.

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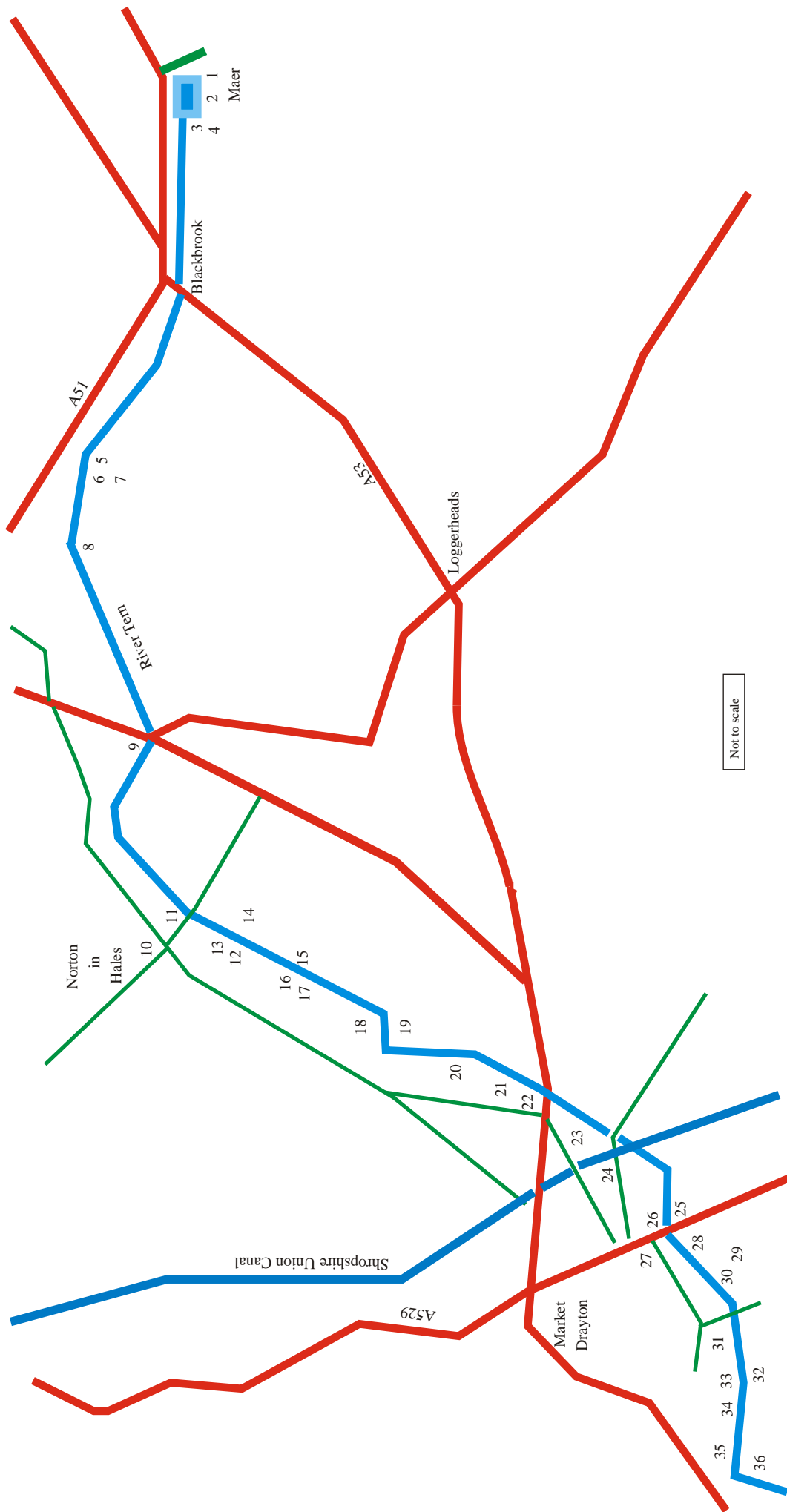
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Map 1 - Maer to Market Drayton



Part 1

From Maer to Market Drayton

The river Tern rises at Maer Pool in the grounds of the Hall at the picturesque village of Maer, just off the busy A51 in Staffordshire (grid ref. SJ 7911 3835). Maer Hall used to belong to the Wedgwood family (pottery) and was often visited by the naturalist, Charles Darwin who married one of the daughters of the family.



Fig. 1 Maer Hall - Staffs. The river Tern rises from the ornamental lake in the grounds of this stately home. SJ 7911 3835

Maer nestles in the valley between the Maer hills to the north and the Ashley/Loggerheads plateau to the south. Half a mile to the north-west of the village is Berth Hill, an iron age hill fort. Water from the Maer hills flows in three directions, eventually to join the rivers Trent, Mersey and Severn; the river Tern forms the southward link to the Severn.



Fig. 2 The ornamental lake at Maer Hall SJ 7911 3835



Fig. 3 The river Tern just after it has left Maer pool SJ 7864 3862 looking east

A noticeable aspect of a journey along the Tern is the regularity with which man has meddled with the river for his own needs and convenience. This is nowhere more obvious than at the river's very beginning; from the moment it leaves the rush-rimmed western end of Maer pool it is channelled due west, parallel to the A51, as a drainage ditch between fields. It continues in this way for about a mile until, at Blackbrook, it turns a few de-

grees northward and again continues straight for another mile until it almost reaches Willoughbridge Wells. A glance at a map of this short stretch shows many smaller ditches at right angles to the river where water from the high ground is drained away from the fields and into the Tern.

Obviously some of the efforts to drain the land are not totally successful - just before the river reaches Blackbrook there is an area known as 'The Bogs' and a little later we also see the 'Lower Bogs Plantation' and then 'Willoughbridge Bogs' near to the Dorothy Clive Gardens. After any heavy rainfall it becomes obvious why these areas are so named.

Soon the Tern reaches Willoughbridge Wells. In the late 17th century Lady Gerard of Gerard's Bromley near Ashley found warm springs here and built a bath house in 1682. Now a large house stands next to the remaining pools and well building, The water was considered to have healing properties and the pools, now just ornamental, were a place of pilgrimage for many years. Next to the well building (fig. 7) are some steps which used to lead into a large sandstone bath before it was covered over.

Fig. 4 The river Tern just after it has left Maer pool SJ 7864 3862 looking west. It continues as a straight, reedy ditch for a couple of miles westward.



The river skirts around the well pools which then add to its flow, as do several small springs and three larger streams at 'Dorrington Bogs'.



Fig. 5 Near Willoughbridge Wells SJ 7474 3964 The river Tern passes under a private roadway



Fig. 6 The pools at Willoughbridge Wells SJ 7452 3957 Steps lead into the water to the right of the well



Fig. 7 The well building at Willoughbridge Wells SJ 7452 3957



Fig. 8 Dorrington Bogs SJ 7409 3952 The river Tern is joined by a stream from the high ground to the south.



Fig. 9 Bearstone Mill SJ 7254 3894 Here the river Tern forms two pools on either side of the road. It then drives the water wheel (under the arch at the left of the building) before flowing on to form the Staffordshire/Shropshire border between here and Market Drayton.

Launching out into open fields, the Tern crosses a small spur of Staffordshire and then becomes the county boundary once more, just before it arrives to perform some real work for man at Bearstone Mill near Knighton. There is a mill mentioned at this site in the Domesday Book. The present 300 year old building, which fell into a dilapidated state, has been well restored by the current owner. The county boundary follows the river all the way from here to Market Drayton.

About three quarters of a mile after Bearstone Mill the river leaves its westward course and turns southwest; another mile and a half of meandering brings it to the first main settlement on its banks - Norton-in-Hales. This pleasant village has a church with out-of-tune clock chimes, an inn, a shop and village school. At the centre of the village can be found a large lump of granite, probably left by a glacier. It is called the Bradling Stone and may have been used in some pagan religious ceremony. The river Tern can be found by heading southeast from the church along Napley Road for a quarter of a mile.



Fig. 10 St. Chad's church, Norton-in-Hales SJ 7035 3869

Originally the river was crossed by means of a ford, while walkers could stay dry by using a footbridge. A road bridge has now replaced the ford and the footbridge has gone, though the 'stepping stones' in Fig. 11 are probably the remains of its original footings, to the left of the road bridge.



Fig. 11 River Tern at Norton-in-Hales SJ 7070 3846

Heading southward, the river soon reaches Norton Forge. This is approached along Forge Lane from Norton in Hales village. The original two stone cottages and forge buildings have gone, replaced by a picturesque wooden chalet-bungalow and farm buildings, but some evidence still remains of the iron workings. It appears that a mill used to stand on the site and a mill pool, small weir and mill race can still be seen. The mill building was approached across the river by means of a small bridge. Designed to carry horse-drawn carts, it is still capable of bearing the weight of modern tractors and other heavy farm machinery. When the forge was built the power from the mill wheel was harnessed to operate a large set of bellows. Though the land on which the forge stood is now a garden and farmyard there are several lumps of iron set in the ground, and further iron lumps in the river and a charcoal pit show the industrial background of the site; the owner of the small farm here took pride in saying that 'this was the real birthplace of the industrial revolution'. Leaving the forge, the Tern enters a wooded and marshy area until it opens out to become the large ornamental lake at Oakley Park.



Fig. 12 The bridge at Norton Forge SJ 7046 3785



Fig. 13 The original mill pool at Norton Forge SJ 7046 3790

In the park and about 230 metres away from Norton Forge are the 'Devil's Ring and Finger'. These are two large stones, one flat with a circular hole in it and one like a long shaft. These may have been part of a prehistoric burial chamber and/or a fertility symbol used in pagan rites. They were moved when the field was cleared for ploughing and built into a wall.



Fig. 14 The Devil's Ring and Finger SJ 7074 3775



Fig. 15 Oakley Hall SJ 7015 3694 The river Tern is dammed to form an ornamental lake behind the hall.

Dated 1710, Oakley Hall was built for Sir John Chetwode, 1st baronet, and was the Chetwode family home until the mid twentieth century. At the back of the hall the land falls away steeply to a large ornamental lake, formed by damming the Tern just downstream of the hall. The water flows from the lake down a vertical sluice at one end of the dam. While dredging the lake and the river just upstream an ancient wooden dug-out canoe was discovered. This is now housed in the museum at Birmingham. Oakley Hall has a well-preserved ice-house, several wells within its grounds and boasts its own small sewage treatment plant.



Fig. 16 Oakley Hall and ornamental lake SJ 7004 3691 created by damming the river Tern



Fig. 17 Oakley Hall ornamental lake SJ 7004 3691

From Oakley the river leaves the estate passing beneath another old stone and brick bridge with the stone footings worn by years of erosion. A nearby house is called Mill House; the Domesday book mentions a mill at Betton. After a half mile of meanders the Tern now passes through some rough woodland where a public footpath crosses by means of a crude bridge constructed from two long planks with a wooden handrail at either side.



Continuing to meander, the Tern now enters an area called 'The Rough'. The valley sides steepen and give the impression of an area which saw some cultivation and landscaping in the past (as part of the grounds of nearby Tunstall Hall) but has been neglected for a considerable time. Streams from Loggerheads and Blore to the west merge and join the Tern by the remains of an old wood and concrete bridge, then further downstream is a small cave or secluded bower cut into the valley side.

Fig. 18 The footbridge near Betton SJ 6940 3587



Fig. 19 Derelict Bridge in The Rough SJ 6941 3577



Fig. 20 The cave near Tunstall Hall SJ 6935 3535

The valley sides now slope more gently and the floor becomes wide river meadows as the river flows past Tunstall Hall. Here can be found a large metal wheel built into a narrow race with some other ironmongery - the remains of a water driven pump which used to lift water to the Hall.

After passing Tunstall Hall, the Tern flows under the main A53 road at Shifford's Bridge.



Fig. 21 The water wheel near Tunstall Hall SJ 6917 3527



Tunstall Hall is a Queen Anne mansion built in 1732. Originally lived in by the Broughton-Adderley family, it has since been a college for girls and is now a residential home for the elderly. There is also a private pre-school nursery in the grounds.

Fig. 22 Tunstall Hall, near Market Drayton. SJ 6905 3535

Just a few yards downstream from Shifford's Bridge man intervenes once again and the river is split into two; the main river goes to the right while a steep sided straight channel leads off to the left, feeding the needs of Tern Fisheries - a trout farm. This is possibly on the site of mediaeval fish pools belonging to the abbey at Combermere (Cheshire) and is also close to the site of Hinsley Mill (grain). The Tern now passes the town of Market Drayton, famous for Robert Clive (of Styche Hall and India), Sir Rowland Hill (1st protestant Lord Mayor of London) and gingerbread. Paper making was an important industry in Market Drayton during the 19th century, and many of the mills on the river were paper mills.



Fig. 23 Tern Fisheries trout farm at Market Drayton SJ 6850 3435



Fig. 24 Shropshire Union Canal Aqueduct near Market Drayton SJ 6846 3430 The river Tern flows under the canal just to the left of this view and passes completely into Shropshire.

The river becomes one again immediately downstream of the trout farm, just before it disappears under the Shropshire Union Canal. As it emerges on the other side of the canal embankment, alongside the Berrisford Road aqueduct, it leaves the county border which now follows the line of the canal to the south (originally the border followed the Tern about one and

a half miles further). From here onwards the river Tern remains within Shropshire for the rest of its journey to the Severn.



Fig. 25 The Tern flows under the mill building at Tyrley Mill SJ 6774 3385



Fig. 26 The sluice gate and mill race (right) at Tyrley Mill SJ 6774 3385

The river passes beneath the road and is swelled by the Coal Brook (which fed Old Mill (paper) at Peatswood). It begins a broad, marshy right hand sweep to pass below the site of Tyrley Castle (now Tyrley Castle Farm) before it once again splits into two. One branch originally serving the Tyrley Mill (paper), going past a garden centre and then under the A529 Market Drayton to Newport road to pass through the town picnic area, while the other turns closer towards the town, to cross the A529 at Newtown, at the bottom of Phoenix Bank. This was originally the main branch of the river, serving the town Tannery (which apparently included a 'mill' building at one time), but now the priority has changed and it is a mere trickle. For many years it also served the Market Drayton open-air swimming pool which has been replaced by a covered and open-air swimming centre.



Fig. 27 Market Drayton (Clive Steps) at the top of Phoenix bank which leads down to Newtown on the A529. SJ 6765 3410



The branch is fed back into the main river at the rear of the swimming pool building. The picnic area progresses from a raised and drained area of lawn to a wilder, marshy area downstream. Here a small pool has been created, promoting the growth of marsh plants and as a habitat for other wildlife.

Fig. 28 Market Drayton picnic area
SJ 6770 3370

Glancing across the fields from this point, into the neighbouring parish of Sutton on Tern, Pell Wall Hall can be seen amongst the trees. Built in the early nineteenth century by John Carline of Shrewsbury, it was the last private house to be designed by the architect Sir John Soane. Unfortunately it has been the victim of a fire which caused extensive damage, though a trust has been formed to undertake its renovation and preservation.

As it leaves the picnic area the Tern passes some houses on its western bank. At one time it passed much closer to these buildings, one of which was yet another paper mill, or the mill cottage connected to it, though information about it is sparse. These houses are along a narrow, unmetalled lane known as Dogkennel lane, which joins Newtown, and the large house at the Newtown junction is also thought to have been a mill of some kind.

A little further and the river passes by some residential properties where one of the residents attempted to create ornamental features by making a pool and weir; these efforts were frowned on by the Water Authority and had to be abandoned. On the other bank are the gardens to Pell Wall Hall, now privately and separately owned. These gardens contain a lake fed by natural springs from which a stream flows down a steep-sided valley to form a pool and then an Italian-style water garden before finally joining the Tern.



Fig. 29 The Lake, Pell Wall Gardens
SJ 6785 3316



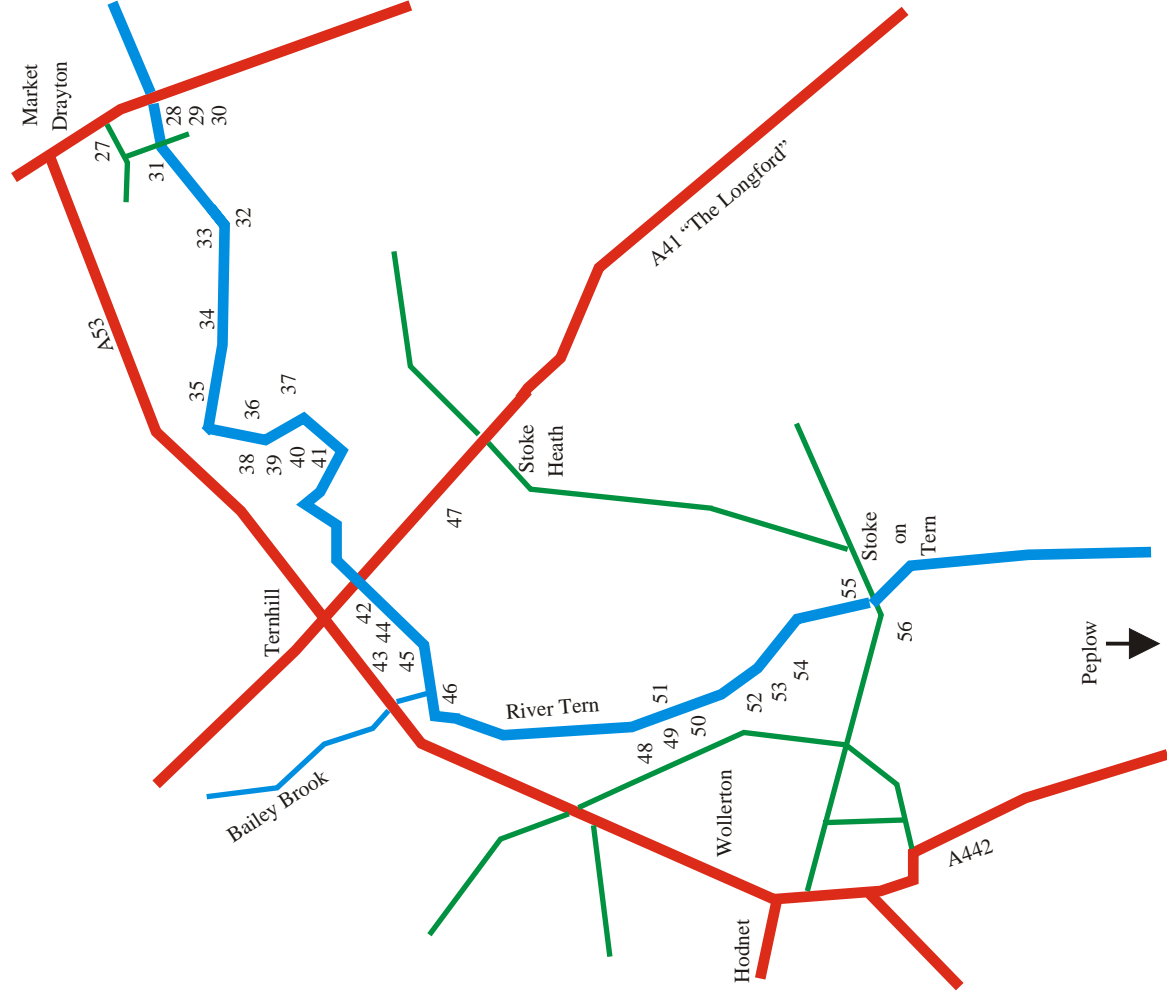
Fig. 30 Remains of the Italian Water Garden at Pell Wall
SJ 6770 3335

A tight right hand turn and a few meanders brings the river towards Walkmill bridge. Once again it splits in two, probably to serve the needs of the Walkmill (probably an old name for a 'fulling' mill - cloth or paper) and then the Victoria mill which replaced it in 1855. The main river bridge is close to the road junction known as Fiveways, on the road towards Market Drayton Golf club, but a little further along this road is another, smaller bridge where the secondary branch of the river flows under the road and through a small nature reserve.



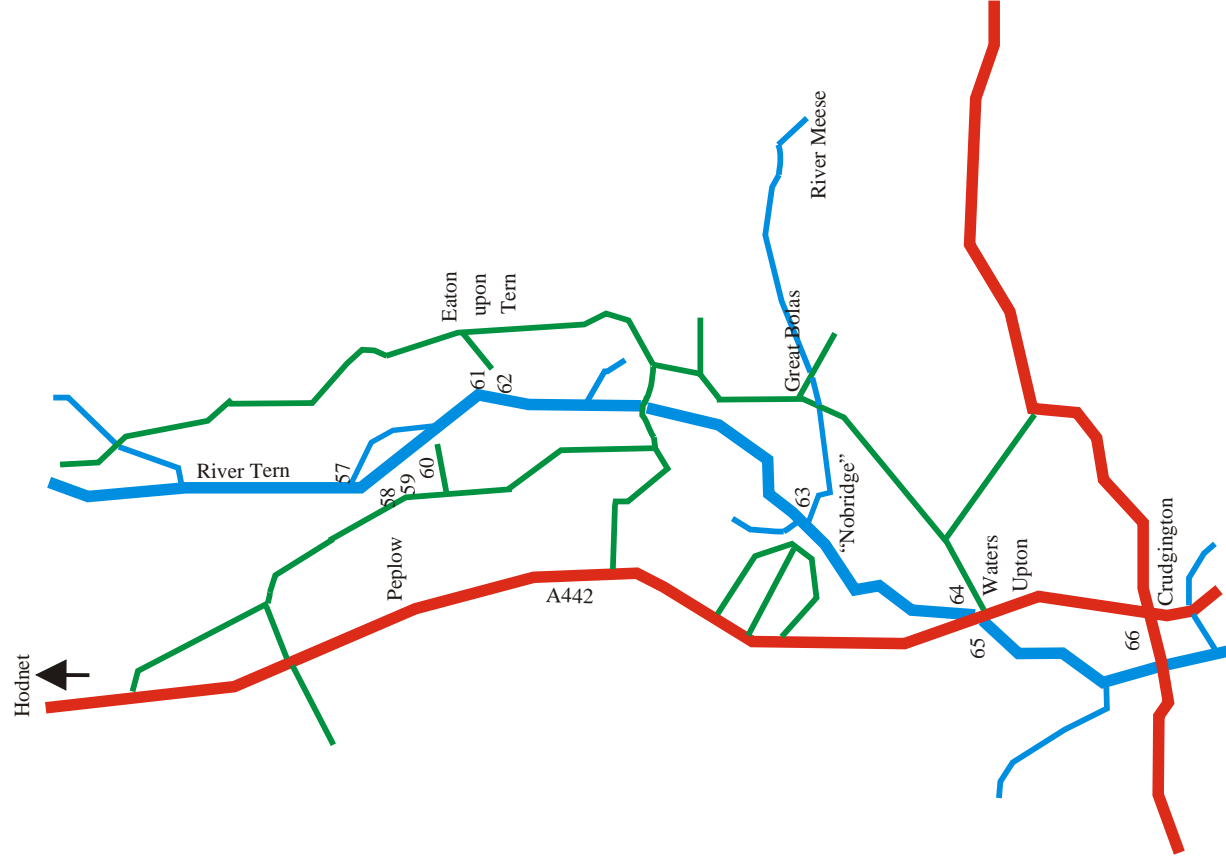
Fig. 31 Walkmill bridge on the river Tern at Market Drayton SJ 6713 3352

Map 2 - Market Drayton to Stoke-on-Tern



Maps not to scale

Map 3 - Peplow to Crudgington



Part 2

From Market Drayton to Crudgington

The two branches join and the river enters the Tern Valley Countryside Project. Created in the early 1990's, the area of meadows alongside the river behind Severn-Trent Ltd. sewage plant has been opened to public access as a natural leisure area. Here the river is overlooked by Salisbury Hill, used in 1459 as the camp for Lord Salisbury and his 5000 Yorkist soldiers the day before they beat a Lancastrian army at the battle of Blore Heath, a short distance to the north. The hill is now home to part of Market Drayton golf course.



Fig. 32 Salisbury Hill, overlooking the river SJ 6715 3300



Fig. 33 Market Drayton Sewage works
SJ 6700 3330



Fig. 34 Market Drayton Sewage works outlet
into the river SJ 6700 3330

The steep slope of Salisbury Hill shows the soft sandstone which the river has eroded, and a little further along, in an area previously known as Little Drayton Heath, the Tern Valley Countryside project has developed a rush-lined pool which nestles below an area of man-made erosion - a quarry. Though some of this land, and further areas of the river bank beyond Buntingsdale, is privately owned, public access has been agreed and permissive footpaths laid to create a pleasant and natural park.



Fig. 35 Pond near sewage works SJ 6680 3320

Leaving this area on foot, a public bridleway follows the river and a ditch, over drains from Quarry bank on the right and leads to Buntingsdale Road where the river passes under the driveway to Buntingsdale Hall, next to a lodge house and gateway.



Fig. 36 The Lodge by the river bridge on the approach to Buntingsdale Hall SJ 6580 3307



Fig. 37 Buntingsdale Hall SJ 6546 3267

Buntingsdale Hall was built for the Mackworth family from Derbyshire in the early 18th Century. The ornamental pools in the grounds, which drain into the Tern near to the Lodge, were dug to provide the clay from which the bricks to build the hall were made. The hall passed to the Tayleur family (cousins of the Mackworths). It was then used by the RAF during the 2nd World War and afterwards until they left the Tern Hill camp and handed it over to the army in the 1970's. The hall was taken over and converted into flats by a group of property developers, but has since been bought and is being restored by Mr. R. Mackworth, a descendant of the original owner.

Where the pools drain into the Tern there is a stone-sided culvert and some other small pieces of masonry. A local builder working at the hall referred to this as "the rapids - there was a mill there with a wheel"; Mr. Mackworth suggests that this was a water-driven pump used to raise enough water to supply the ornamental pools though others suggest it was also the site of a mill.



Fig. 38 A culvert at Buntingsdale near to where water from the ornamental pools joins the Tern. Probably the site of a water-driven pump to raise water about 5 feet to supply the pools. SJ 6565 3314



Fig. 39 180 degree meanders on the Tern
behind the Müller factory
SJ 6550 3320

From Buntingsdale through to Tern Hill the Tern valley gradually spreads out to form a shallow flood plain which, at its widest, is almost half a mile across. However the river itself does not widen very much but rather digs down into the soft rock, making a narrow track with steep banks which cuts deep meanders in the valley floor. On its way it passes the Müller (yoghurt) factory with its four large white

buildings standing guard above the valley (and its drainage system flowing into the river), then past an older yoghurt-making firm, Fordhall Farm (by a ford to the Hall, perhaps?). Shortly it rounds an ancient earthwork on the right, with Buntingsdale hall on the left, and enters the wide flood plain which leads down to the main Wirral to Wolverhampton road (A41) at Tern Hill.

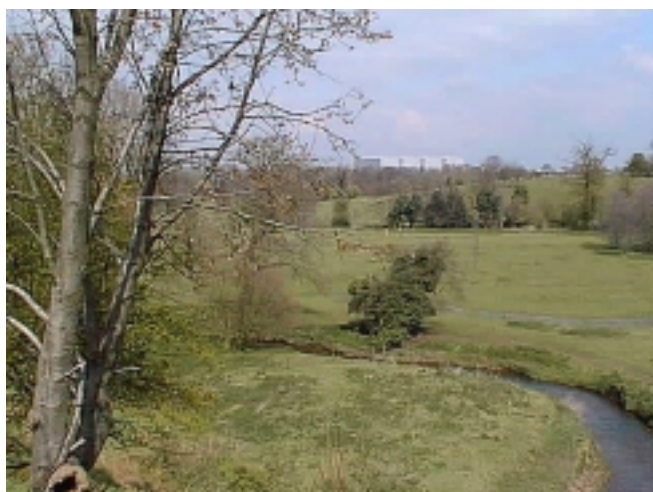


Fig. 40 Tern valley viewed from the Earthwork SJ 6510 3250
notice the four white 'sentries' of Müller's in the distance.



Fig. 41 Buntingsdale Hall - looking across the
valley from the Earthwork SJ 6510 3250

The valley narrows as the Tern passes beneath the A41 between Tern Hill roundabout and the Clive Barracks. Though the barracks are now occupied by the army, the RAF still use the attached airfield and so it is quite normal to see gliders flying low or helicopters from the training school at nearby Shawbury. This stretch of the A41 is also known as *The Longford* and follows the track of a Roman roadway. The bridge is an uninspiring, corrugated-iron lined structure which replaced a previous bridge when the road was widened. The river now falls over a small weir and moves on to pass behind Tern Hill Hall, a pleasantly situated and well-appointed hotel.



Fig. 42 Bridge at Tern Hill carrying the A41
over the river. SJ 6380 3194



Fig. 43 Tern Hill Hall Hotel SJ 6345 3176



Fig. 44 Tern Hill Hall Hotel Pumping House SJ 6355 3180

Tern Hill Hall Country House Hotel was built in 1911 by the Coghill family from Stoke-on-Trent as a wedding present. The family also built Tern Hill railway station as an unloading point for the materials used to build the hall. A sewage treatment plant was constructed to serve the hall and coach-house. In the field behind the Hall stands a small building which still houses the remains of a steam-driven pump. This was used to raise water from the Tern to supply the hall, coachman's house and other houses and farms in the locality.



Fig. 45 Weir at Cartwright's farm
SJ 6345 3160

Immediately downstream of Tern Hill Hall the river passes through the back garden of a farm where it falls over a small weir (Fig. 45). This was apparently the site of a mill building - the present owner says that her father used to keep his chickens in there and that she used to play in the mill as a child. Unfortunately the building collapsed and floated away down the river, complete with chickens. After flowing under the old railway line the Tern is swelled by Bailey Brook (entering from the left in Fig. 46) before it performs a long, left-hand sweep, passes back under the railway and heads off past Lostford (perhaps a river crossing in times gone by?), between Tern Hill airfield on the left and the village of Wollerton on the right, across the plain towards Stoke-on Tern



Fig. 46 River Tern passes below the old railway line
SJ 6282 3147



Fig. 47 Tern Hill airfield
SJ 6440 3080

Along the mile of valley between Wollerton and Stoke on Tern the land drops only a few feet and so the river flows slowly, water collects on the flood plain and numerous drainage ditches are needed to keep the ground from becoming too marshy. Nevertheless the river generated enough power to drive two undershot water wheels, and later a turbine generator for the corn mill at Wollerton. A mill at this point is recorded in the Domesday Book. The present buildings, which were in use as a mill



into the 1970's and then left derelict, have been tastefully renovated to provide dwellings and out-houses. In figure 48 we can see the main mill building with the additional turbine house on the right. Next to this is the housing for one of the wheels, the other mill race having now become the entrance hall, front door and front garden. The left of the building with the high arched doorways was the cart shed while the building behind the mill - now a separate house - was the stable block. Opposite, out of view, is the granary building, now being used as outhouses.

Fig. 48 Wollerton Mill SJ 6250 2982



Fig. 49 Wollerton Mill - the wheel housings SJ 6250 2982



Fig. 50 Wollerton Mill - the lounge SJ 6250 2982

The mill presently stands high and dry, about eighty metres away from the river. When it was working the water was controlled by an upstream sluice gate and channelled to drive the wheels; little evidence of this watercourse remains and the wheel and turbine housings stand empty and carpeted with grass. Power was transferred to operate the four millstones, hoists and other associated machinery by the usual array of shafts, gears and pulleys. Where possible these have been left in place during the renovation providing interesting features in the lounge and helping to retain some of the original atmosphere and purpose of the building.



Over the field from the mill a footbridge crosses the river carrying a footpath which allows the public to walk along the river bank and joins with public and permissive footpaths to provide a route between Wollerton and Tern Hill.

Fig. 51 Footbridge across the Tern at Wollerton
SJ 6260 2982

Soon after leaving Wollerton Mill the Tern passes close to Wollerton Old Hall, a quaint, half-timbered country house. The fertile land of the river valley has been cultivated to create a beautiful garden, partly formal, partly more naturalised, which stretches down from the hall, almost to the river bank. This is open to the public from Spring to Autumn.



Fig. 52 Wollerton Old Hall Courtyard SJ 6245 2955



Fig. 53 Wollerton Old Hall Garden SJ 6245 2955



Fig. 54 Wollerton Old Hall SJ 6245 2955

The river now collects water from the drainage ditches along the valley to Stoke on Tern. This small village was originally called North Stoke to distinguish it from South Stoke, or Stokesay in southwest Shropshire. It is listed in the Domesday Book as being quite important and having a mill on the Tern. In 1853 it was the birthplace of Thomas Dutton, the Shropshire giant. He was seven foot three tall and weighed twenty-three stone. The church of St. Peter stands on the river plain at the junction with a stream; it was built in the last century and is the latest in a long line of churches built on this site. Nearby there are also the very sparse remains of a castle, possibly dating back to the 13th century. Looking across the fields we see Petsey farm, a finely restored half-timbered house dated 1634.



Fig. 55 Church of St. Peter, Stoke on Tern. The river is to the left of this view. SJ 6380 2798



Fig. 56 Petsey farm, Stoke on Tern SJ 6365 2765

Bishop Heber of nearby Hodnet Hall, a well-known 19th Century hymn writer, wrote of the river at Stoke on Tern -

“ I love to tread the little paths, the rushy banks between,
Where Tern, in dewy silence, creeps through the meadows green. “

The Tern now continues to creep through green meadows due south until it reaches Peplow. Here it is split into two and a large automatic sluice gate controls the flow of the river (to the left) so that the level is maintained in the large ornamental lake to Peplow Hall (to the right).



Fig. 57 Sluice at Peplow SJ 6400 2500



Fig. 58 Peplow Hall from entrance gates SJ 6385 2475



Fig. 59 Peplow Hall from lake SJ 6415 2470

Peplow Hall is an attractive 18th century house which can be seen down a long driveway from fine wrought iron entrance gates. Behind the hall there are well kept lawns which sweep down to the tree-bordered ornamental lake complete with boat house and small island. Though the estate is privately owned and not generally open to the public there is a public footpath which runs beside the grounds and over the river between Peplow and the village of Ollerton. Some of the estate outbuildings, such as the stable block, are used as private residences and workshops for small businesses. On the eastern side of the river at the entrance to Ollerton park there is a lodge house to the estate, but on the western side, close to the hall itself, the lodge is replaced by a 19th century chapel.

Although the lake is an excellent ornamental water feature in its own right, it was originally created to form a head of water to drive the wheel at Peplow Mill. From the lake the water trickles down a narrow stone 'staircase' and then flows into another pool directly behind the mill. It was then used to drive the wheel for this large and busy corn mill, but eventually the wheel was replaced by a water-driven turbine, housed in the small additional building attached to the left of main mill house (Fig.60). A pair of sluice gates controlled the flow of water down two channels - one straight past and one through the turbine - so that the speed of the turbine could be fully controlled. This installation supplied electricity to the mill and its outbuildings (now all private residences), the hall and other homes in the area until its output could not keep pace with the demand in the 1950's.



Fig. 60 Peplow Mill SJ 6428 2425

The two branches of the river reunite a short distance below Peplow Mill and the Tern executes numerous meanders along the barely sloping valley until it reaches Eaton on Tern (*old-English Ea-tun, meaning 'settlement by a river'*). The village stands some way to the east of the river but a trip down Mill Lane brings us to the site of the seemingly obligatory corn mill. Here the river falls over a small weir where originally a channel was led off to form a mill pool, from where the stream flowed under the mill to turn the wheel before running back into the main river.



Fig. 61 Weir at Eaton on Tern Mill
SJ 6490 2308



Fig. 62 Remains of Eaton on Tern Mill.
SJ 6490 2308

The remains of the mill seem to stand too high above the river for the water to have driven a wheel, but the channel and mill pool have filled up with soil and thick vegetation over years of dereliction. The photograph in Figure 62 is taken from the middle of the old pool area and the dark section below the ruined brickwork is where the water would have passed to drive the wheel. On the other side of the ruin is a small, shallow, stagnant pool where the mill race would have flowed back to the river. On downstream and the Tern passes between the villages of Little Bolas and Great Bolas and soon reaches the first great challenge to its supremacy when it is joined by the River Meese at Nobridge. The Meese starts way to the east near Newport and by the time it joins the Tern it is of comparable size. However in this marriage of rivers it is the Tern which continues on towards the Wrekin, the well known Shropshire hill which is now beginning to dominate the southern skyline.



Fig. 63 The Meese (right) joins the Tern below Great Bolas at 'Nobridge' SJ 6385 2080

The name **Nobridge** cannot be found on the map but is a local name for the place where the two rivers meet; we are also reminded of it by Nobridge Nurseries on the nearby A442. Apparently the locals placed large stones in the river so that they could walk easily between the villages of Cold Hatton and Great Bolas. Though there is a bridge over the river as can be seen in the photograph, the locals still call it *Nobridge*. At this point the Tern is still running through soft sandstone and the height of its banks show how deeply the water cuts into the soft rock.

From Hodnet the Tern has been running alongside, and gradually converging with the A442 road to Wellington. At Waters Upton this relationship ends as the river passes under the road and begins to head southwest towards the Severn.



Fig. 64 Waters Upton Hall SJ 6340 1950

The river Tern forms the western boundary of the tiny parish of Waters Upton. This sleepy village is mentioned in the Domesday book as Uptone (a farm or enclosure) and takes its present name from a 13th century local landowner, Walter Fitz-John. Its name could, therefore, be translated as 'Walter's Farm'.

Among the several large houses in the area is Waters Upton Hall. This is a 16th century timber-framed building which was given a redbrick *overcoat* during the 18th century.



Fig. 65 The Bridge at Waters Upton SJ 6310 1945

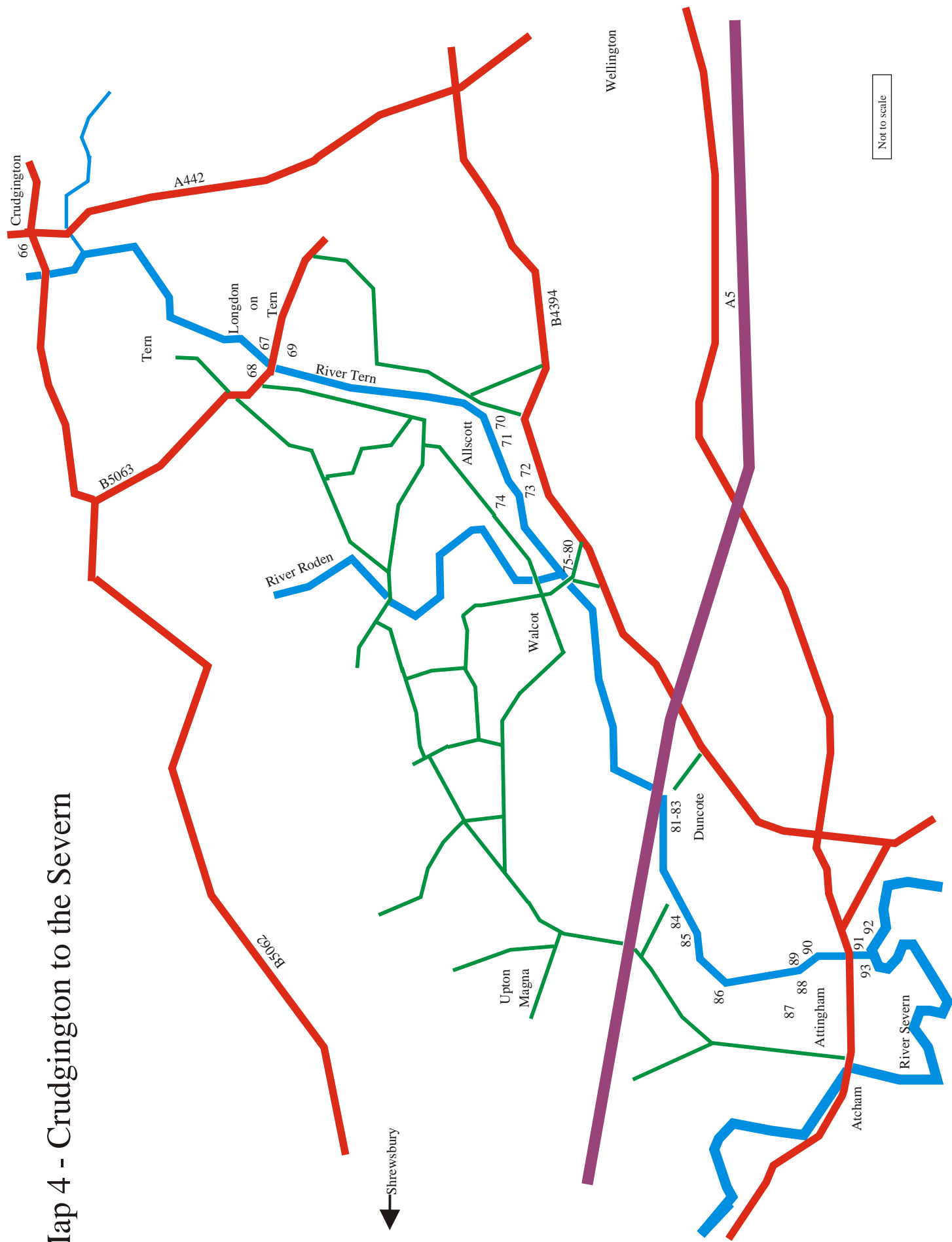
The bridge over the river at Waters Upton bears an inscription stating that it was built by subscription in 1782 to a design of the architect W. Hayward, then rebuilt in 1934 by Shropshire County Council. Apart from its short trip through Market Drayton to the north, the Tern has generally had a rural setting, the main effects of industry being seen only in the numerous mills and water wheels, most other disturbances of its natural course being for decorative purposes. However its flow is now increasing, becoming useful for more than irrigation and the turning of a few wheels and so less picturesque developments begin to appear on its banks.



Fig. 66 Dairy Crest Creamery, Crudgington SJ 6290 1810

The Tern cuts deep into the shallow valley (having been artificially lowered under the Weald Moors drainage scheme) as it heads southwest from Waters Upton and then turns south, alongside the now defunct railway line and joined by the Lakemoor Brook from the northwest, to pass the Dairy Crest creamery at Crudgington, close to where it is joined by the Strine Brook.

Map 4 - Crudgington to the Severn



Part 3

From Crudgington to the Severn

After passing the creamery the river takes a tree-lined course through rich farmland, passing by a rocky outcrop on its eastern bank and the small hamlet, simply called Tern to the west. Tern is approached along Tern Lane from the north side of Longdon on Tern. The lane passes by a few houses, two small water reservoirs on the left, and then drops towards the river to arrive at Tern Farm. This is a large, early 19th century farm with extensive outbuildings and a few adjoining cottages. The stable and carriage house sports a stone plaque with the date 1818 and a crown, signifying that the farm is part of the estate of the Duke of Sutherland, as are other farms nearby. The remains of older, half-timbered farm buildings can still be clearly seen and the hamlet is noted in the Domesday Book. The river is used by the farm for irrigation purposes. It is now joined by Beanhill Brook from the east and soon reaches Longdon on Tern with its famous aqueduct.



Fig. 67 The Aqueduct, Longdon on Tern SJ 6175 1560



Fig. 68 The Aqueduct, Longdon on Tern SJ 6175 1560

A branch of the Shropshire Union Canal used to pass through the parish of Longdon on Tern on its way to Shrewsbury. Though it was in use within living memory, little of this canal remains. However, one important piece of canal architecture is the aqueduct which carried the canal over the Tern at Longdon. Built by Thomas Telford in 1795, it is a 55 metre long cast-iron trough supported at both ends by brick pillars. It was cast in sections at nearby Ketley and it is said that Telford used it as a test piece before he went on to build the 301 metre long, 39 metre high Pontcysyllte Aqueduct over the river Dee near to Llangollen. The 200 year anniversary of the aqueduct was celebrated in 1995 and many houses and public houses in the area have plaques commemorating the event. The aqueduct seems to have stood the test of time and would probably still be watertight if holes had not been drilled through the floor to allow drainage of rainwater.

After the aqueduct the Tern is crossed by a picturesque, though fairly modern bridge. The course of the river has been changed, formerly flowing further to the south to provide power to Longdon Mill. Judging by the size of the mill 'warehouse' - figure 69 - and the adjoining house, this must have been a sizeable business, but nothing of the actual mill building remains. The mill house is still occupied, though most of the buildings are in an advanced state of disrepair.



Fig. 69 The Mill warehouse, Longdon on Tern SJ 6170 1535

Continuing south between the sewage works at Rushmore and the small village of Isombridge, the Tern soon reaches Allscott where, one again, it was used to power a grain mill. Mentioned in the Domesday book and once owned by the monks from Haughmond Abbey near Shrewsbury, the present 18th century building has been converted into a private house, the mill pond being made into an ornamental pool. The mill was last worked in 1938, after which the metal water wheel was taken to be melted down as part of the second World War effort. The owner spoke about the work of the water and environment agencies with regard to the Tern, saying how successful efforts to clean up the river had been, allowing the growth and development of a large number and variety of fish. Conversations with other local residents and fishermen support this, and it seems that from Eaton on Tern down to Allscott, the river provides excellent fishing, especially for eels.



Fig. 70 Allscott Mill SJ 6115 1328



Fig. 71 The Mill Pool, Allscott Mill SJ 6115 1328

An industrial landscape now greets the Tern as it turns south west and approaches the Sugar Beet factory at Allscott. Though the factory stands some distance south of the river, the intervening area is covered with settlement pools. Waste material and water is pumped through overhead pipelines from the factory and the liquid passes through a series of pools to allow the waste to settle out before the water is returned to the river.



Fig. 72 The Sugar Beet factory at Allscott
(above) SJ 6050 1250

Fig. 73 A pipeline over the Tern and settlement
pools by the Sugar Beet factory
(right) SJ 6030 1285



Fig. 74 Large pool at Mirelake (below)
SJ 5960 1290



The settlement pools continue on the north side of the river in an area descriptively known as Mirelake. The Environment Agency are based nearby at Mirelake farm, carrying out tests to monitor the condition of the river and working to maintain and improve the environment and habitat around the Tern.

Shortly after leaving the sugar factory the Tern broadens as it approaches the site of the corn mill at Walcot. This was in use well into the 20th century, ceasing operation shortly before the sugar factory was built and the main building was converted to apartments to house the building workers. After the factory was finished, attempts were made to sell the apartments but, after little success, the main mill building was demolished in the 1960's, leaving the stables, the 'clock house' and the sluice gates on the river which are still used to maintain the water level for the factory up river, and for flood control purposes. The clock house is now a private residence, and its occupant remembers the days when the mill was fully operational and boats loaded with grain plied the river between Walcot, Allscott and Longdon. After the Tern has passed the floodgates and the separate mill race it is joined from the north by the river Roden before flowing under the road and away towards the Attingham estate.



Fig. 75 The Clock House, Walcot Mill SJ 5935 1235



Fig. 76 The Mill Race, Walcot Mill SJ 5935 1235



Fig. 77 The river above the sluice, Walcot Mill SJ 5935 1235



Fig. 78 The main sluice, Walcot Mill SJ 5935 1235



Fig. 79 The river Roden joins the Tern SJ 5935 1235



Fig. 80 The bridge below Walcot Mill SJ 5935 1235

A short way south west of Walcot, by the side of the B4394 road from Allscott towards Atcham, the map shows Duncote Mill. On enquiry this was found to be a fairly modern, prefabricated building which was originally used as a grain store and where some mixing and milling of animal feed was carried out. Though this building was not connected with the river in any way, further enquiry led to nearby Duncote Farm, situated next to the Tern where two adjacent bridges, one old and one new, carry the railway and the A5 road over the river.



Fig. 81 Duncote Farm SJ 5726 1140



Fig. 82 Road and rail cross the Tern SJ 5710 1150



Fig. 83 The 17th century packhorse bridge SJ 5710 1150

Duncote farm is an imposing, half-timbered building within the eastern part of the Attingham Estate. The oldest part of the house dates back to Mediaeval times. It is situated at a river crossing which must have been of some importance in bygone days; a map of the area shows a number of footpaths meeting at this point and a conversation with the National Trust archaeologist at Attingham revealed that the Roman road between Wroxeter to the south and Whitchurch to the north crossed the river here. The course of the Tern has been straightened and its old route is now served by a concrete drain, leading to a nettle-covered marshy area wherein lies a small stone arch - a 17th century packhorse bridge over the river. This bridge and the wooden one next to it lie directly on the route of the Roman road.



Fig. 84 The Pill Box at Upton Forge SJ 5600 1120

There was also a thriving, water-driven grain mill here in Mediaeval times - the original Duncote Mill - though there is now no physical evidence of its existence. When the foundations for the present A5 bridge were dug (Fig. 82), iron workings were found here as well, suggesting that there was a forge on this site, maybe linked with Upton Forge a short distance downstream. Situated on the pathway between Upton Magna and Wroxeter, there is now little evidence of the heavy industry where the links for the Menai suspension bridge were forged, except for a large house, a few small cottages and the overgrown marshy area where the river's flow was diverted to drive machinery. Though it is known that the river was navigable at least to Upton it is probable that the iron work produced at the forge was transported on the canal which used to pass close by. The Tern is crossed by an uninspiring concrete bridge defended by a World War Two 'pill box'.

A permissive footpath beside the river leads past the 'Botany Bay Plantation' to a modern footbridge crossing the Tern on the Attingham estate. The Botany Bay Plantation is one of the large areas of woodland in Attingham park. It was difficult to discover any clue as to the reason for this name; the only reference found was in a book on field names produced by the Shropshire Archaeological Society. This explained that it was a name sometimes given to land which was difficult to work, and had also often been used to name a temporary camp for 'navvies' working on railway or canal construction; as the branch of the Shropshire Union Canal used to pass very close to here at Berwick Wharf, this seems a likely explanation.



Fig. 85 The Tern from Upton Forge with Botany Bay Plantation on the left SJ 5600 1120



Fig. 86 Footbridge by the Botany Bay Plantation, Attingham Park SJ 5529 1090

Attingham is a large, elegant 18th century mansion set in landscaped parkland alongside the river Tern. The present house stands on the site of an older building - a brick-built Queen Anne house called Tern Hall - which was bought in 1701 by Richard Hill, a member of the Hill family from Hawkstone Park near Wem. The property passed initially through the female line of descent until inherited by Noel Hill in 1782. He immediately began design and building work and the renamed Attingham Hall, designed by George Steuart, encompassed and replaced the older building. Noel Hill was a member of parliament and was granted a peerage in 1784, becoming the 1st Lord Berwick. On his death the estate passed to his son, Thomas Hill (2nd Lord Berwick) who commissioned further additions and alterations from the architect John Nash.

In 1947 the complete Attingham estate was bequeathed to the National Trust who open the house, the Deer Park and areas of the grounds around the river to the public. Attingham is now the Mercia Regional Office for the National Trust.



Fig. 87 Attingham Park SJ 5500 0990

On the river bank immediately below Tern Hall stood a corn mill and one of the largest iron forges in the area. The iron works were in operation from 1710 to 1757 and the mill was possibly used for a further twenty years. However the Berwick family were at pains to have these unsightly buildings removed and most of them were gone by the time Humphry Repton produced his 'Red Book' of designs for the landscaping of the park in 1797-98. Also demolished was the lock which allowed the safe passage of boats between the Tern and the Severn. A few scant remains of this structure are still to be seen, though much overgrown. Repton's main contribution was to make considerable use of the river in the landscape features near to the house; the river was widened, almost into a lake below the house by means of a weir and a 'cascade' was constructed. The final remnants of Tern Forge were removed and the view to Tern Bridge, erected in 1780 to carry the Wellington to Shrewsbury road over the river, was enhanced.



Fig. 88 Where the Tern has been widened in Attingham Park SJ 5520 0985



Fig. 89 Site of Tern Forge, Attingham SJ 5520 0985



Fig. 90 Bridge to Deer Park, Attingham SJ 5520 0985

Figure 88 shows the Tern just below the main house (to the left of this view). Here the river was widened. It is also split into two streams; the right fork flows under the bridge down a cascade, emerging at the site of the Tern Forge (Fig. 89). At the left of this view is a ruined building which may have been a boathouse. Crossing this bridge (left to right as viewed in figs. 89 & 90) leads to another, more modern bridge which crosses the left fork of the river, complete with weir and sluice gate. Over this bridge the path leads to the Deer Park which forms part of a pleasant walk around the estate with excellent views of the house. The two forks combine just before the river passes under the road at Tern Bridge.



Fig. 91 Tern Bridge, Attingham SJ 5525 0930



Fig. 92 Confluence Cottage, Attingham SJ 5542 0915

The B4380 crosses the river Severn and runs past the entrance to Attingham Park at the village of Atcham. Continuing towards Wellington, the road passes Tern Lodge, the gatehouse designed by Nash which stands at the original entrance to the Attingham estate, shortly after it crosses the Tern at the Tern Bridge. Built further south than originally planned so that the 2nd Lord Berwick could extend his parkland, this bridge affords an impressive view of the house looking north and the confluence of Severn and Tern looking south. In the field next to the bridge stands the 1792 fishing lodge to the Attingham estate. Known as Confluence Cottage, it stands at the point where the Tern relinquishes its name and identity, swelling the Severn on its way south.



Fig. 93 The Tern (right) joins the Severn. Confluence Cottage is above on the right SJ 5532 0915

Appendix I - Domesday Book References

Here are a few references to places along the Tern found in the Domesday Book. Much more information is actually given but here I have simply included references to the use of the river and the value placed on the property and resources. This gives some idea of the role of the river within the community and it is interesting to note how the relative importance of some of the settlements has changed over time; for instance the tiny village of Betton in North Shropshire was quite valuable and with a mill, whereas nearby Market Drayton was simply an outlying area of Hodnet. Now, of course, the positions are completely reversed.

Though several people are mentioned as holding property in the area (including the famed Lady Godiva) most of these held the land under Earl Roger of Montgomery, a powerful Norman Nobleman who had overall control of most of Shropshire. Only a few other named persons and churches held land directly from the King. Earl Roger's forces, along with the support of neighbouring Earls in Cheshire and Herefordshire, generally kept the peace and sometimes invaded and occupied the Welsh borderlands.

Maer (Staffordshire)	Value 10 shillings.
Bearstone (Shropshire)	In Hodnet Hundred. A mill at 3 shillings Value - before 1066, 20 shillings; after, 10 shillings.
Norton in Hales	In Hodnet Hundred. Value - before 1066, 30 shillings; after, 20 shillings.
Betton	In Hodnet Hundred. A mill Value - before 1066, 40 shillings; after, 30 shillings.
(Market) Drayton	An outlier in Hodnet Hundred, jointly held. 1st holder Value - before 1066, 20 shillings; after, 10 shillings. 2nd holder Value - before 1066, 8 shillings; after, 6 shillings and 8 pence.
Buntingsdale	Part of Cross Hills in Wrockwardine Hundred
Tern Hill	Part of the lost manor of "Chatsall" in Wrockwardine Hundred
Wollerton	In Hodnet Hundred. A mill at 10 shillings Value - before 1066, 15 shillings; after, 25 shillings.
Stoke on Tern	In Wrockwardine Hundred. A mill at 12 shillings Value - before 1066, £6; after, £7
Petsey	An outlier of Stoke on Tern.

Peplow	In Wrockwardine Hundred. Value - before 1066, 46 shillings; after, 12 shillings and 4 pence.
Eaton upon Tern	An outlier of Stoke on Tern.
Great Bolas	Linked with Isombridge as part of a large, scattered manor.
(Waters) Upton	In Wrockwardine Hundred. A mill at 12 shillings and 1 penny Value - before 1066, 40 shillings and 4 pence; after, 30 shillings and 2 pence farthing.
Crudgington	In Wrockwardine Hundred. 4 fisheries at 13 shillings and 4 pence Value - before 1066, 73 shillings and 4 pence; after, £4 and 1000 eels.
Tern	Probably part of the parish of Ercall Magna, possibly held by William, Lord of Tern who gave the majority of it to Lilleshall Abbey.
Longdon upon Tern	In Wrockwardine Hundred. A mill at 5 shillings. Value before 1066, 21 shillings; after, 9 shillings and 4 pence
Isombridge	In Wrockwardine Hundred. A mill which pays 3 packloads of corn Value 20 shillings
Allscott	In Wrockwardine Hundred. Not mentioned directly but part of Wrockwardine. Probably the site of the mill at 12 shillings
Walcot	In Wrockwardine Hundred. Not mentioned directly but part of Wellington. Probably the site of the mill at 12 shillings and 2 fisheries at 8 shillings
Upton Magna	In Wrockwardine Hundred. A mill at 16 shillings; a fishery which pays what it can Value before 1066, £10; after, £7

Appendix II - Books and other reference material

Staffordshire - A Shell Guide	Henry Thurolde	1978
The Buildings of England -Staffordshire	Nikolaus Pevsner	1974
The Staffordshire Domesday	C. F. Slade	1985
Domesday Book - Shropshire	General Editor: John Morris	1986
The Shropshire Landscape	Trevor Rowley	1972
A Shropshire Gazetteer	Michael Raven	1989
A Visitor's Guide to North-East Shropshire	Tim Carrington (Shropshire Promotions)	
A Visitor's Guide to Central Shropshire	Tim Carrington (Shropshire Promotions)	
Shropshire Legends and People	Tim Carrington (Shropshire Promotions)	
Market Drayton - A town and its people	Editor: Barry Pitt	1977
Market Drayton - A study in social history	N. & S.V. Rowley	1966
The Story of Market Drayton	N. Rowley	1987
A History of Market Drayton	Rev. J.R. Lee	1861
Market Drayton & Norton in Hales (old postcards)	Barbara and Dennis Morris	1989
Documents concerning the parish of Woore	from the local studies library, Shrewsbury	
Documents concerning the parish of Norton in Hales	from the local studies library, Shrewsbury	
Documents concerning the parish of Stoke-on-Tern	from the local studies library, Shrewsbury	
Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society	Volume 21	1975
Shropshire Field Names	H. D. G. Foxall	1980
Attingham Park	The National Trust	1992
The Voyage of Charles Darwin	Christopher Ralling	1979
The Sleepy Meese	D.H. Robinson	1988

Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 Pathfinder Maps

Market Drayton & Ashley Heath	829
Hodnet & Norbury	849
Telford (North)	870
Shrewsbury	869

Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 Landranger Map

Shrewsbury & surrounding area	126
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Appendix III

The Tern in Flood

October 1998



These snapshots were taken during the last week of October 1998 when certain areas, particularly along the Severn and Wye rivers, suffered the worst flooding for more than twenty years. The

Tern was not greatly effected, though in Market Drayton (top three photographs) part of the picnic area was underwater and at its confluence with the Severn a large lake was formed in the grounds of Attingham Park.